(b) if so, the quantum of rubber imported during the above period, company-wise ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir. natural rubber is allowed for import under the Advance Licensing Scheme without payment of basic customs duty for manufacture and export of products where it is required as an input material.

(b) No separate data for import of any specific commodity, including natural rubber, is maintained company-wise, under the Advance Licensing Scheme. However, total quantities and values of imports of natural rubber (including natural rubber imported under the Advance Licensing Scheme) during the period 1995-96 and 1996-97 till June, 96 are as follows :

Period	Quantity in MT Quantity	Value in Rs. Lakhs Value
AM95-96	50728	27,582.73
1996-97 till June'96	3680	2,303.63

(Source : DGCI&S)

Looksan Tea Estate of TTCI

5604. PROF. JITENDRA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Looksan Tea Estate under Tea Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (TTCI) is in deplorable condition;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government propose to hand-over this Estate to any other organisations under his Ministry;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor and the steps taken by the Government to revive the above Tea Estate ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (e). There are five tea gardens with the Tea Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (TTCI). All these gardens, including the Looksan Tea Estate, are suffering cash losses. In view of persistent losses suffered by these gardens it had been decided to dispose them of, including Looksan Tea Estate, throughout right sale. Following this, Looksan Tea Estate, was offered to M/s. Andrew Yule & Co. who were the highest bidder for the tea estate. The sale process could not however, be completed due to court cases and financial problems faced by Andrew Yule & Co.

Government are keen to complete the process of sale of the gardens including Looksan Tea Estate as early as possible and all possible steps are being taken to expedite the sale process. In the meanwhile, salaries/wages, rations etc. of the workers of Looksan Tea Estate have been paid by TTCI upto August, 1996.

[Translation]

Setting up of Export Promotion Parks in U.P.

5605. SHRI S.P. JAISWAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the amount allocated by the Government for setting up Export Promotion Industrial Parks in Uttar Pradesh during 1995-96 and 1996-97;

(b) the estimated cost of the above parks and the extent of State Governments participation therein; and

(c) the details of objectives of these Parks ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Allocation of funds for setting of Export Promotion Industrial Parks (EPIPS) is not made state-wise. An amount of Rs. 91 lakhs was released in 1995-96 to Government of Uttar Pradesh for the EPIP at Surajpur-Kasna, Greater Noida. No proposal has so far been received, on the basis of pogress of implementation for release of Central Grant during 1996-97.

(b) The project proposal of the Government of Uttar Pradesh envisages the share of State Government, in the total estimated cost of the Park of Rs. 20.19 crores, to be Rs. 5.19 crores.

(c) The objectives of the EPIP include involving the State Governments in export efforts and building up of infrastructure facilities for export oriented production.

[English]

Delicensing of Liquor Industry

5606. SHRI A.C. JOS : Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to delicense the liquor industry; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN) : (a) No,Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Loan from Financial Institutions for Industrial Growth in Assam

5607. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the financial assistance from the All India Financial Institutions for the industrial growth in the State of Assam has been on the decline over the years;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether the Government while considering the backwardness of the State of Assam, proposed any modification of the norms of lending by the financial institutions; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). No, Sir. The Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI) has reported that during the last three years, there is an overall increasing trend in the institutional assistance sanctioned to projects in Assam. The details of financial assistance provided by All India Financial Institutions to industries in Assam during 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96 are as under :

(Rs. crores)

Year	Sanctioned	Disbursed
1993-94	62.00	75.62
1994-95	114.31	65.20
1995-96	639.77	120.05

(c) and (d). IDBI has reported that the decision to locate a project in a particular State/Region vests with the promoters and they in turn are guided by such factors as availability of infrastructure, raw materials, skilled labour, proximity of the location to the market for their products and incentives from the State Government. Financial Institutions assess the location from the angle of its suitability to the project.

IDBI has further reported that all financially, economically, commercially viable and technically feassible projects are supported by institutions irrespective of their location.

Extra Charges on Premiums of L.I.C.

5608. SHRI DWARAKA NATH DAS : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether extra 5% is being charged on premiums by LIC when a policy holder pays monthly premiums instead of quarterly ones;

(b) if so, the details therefor;

(c) whether in case of discontinuance of policy before its paid-up stage, the capital amount is refunded only after the period of its maturity to the policy holders;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the remedial steps taken in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). The premium tables are prepared by the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) on quarterly basis. These rates are adjusted for yearly, half-yearly and monthly quotations. The tabular rates without any charge are used for monthly payment through Salary Saving Scheme because of bulk business. However, 5% extra is charged in cases where payments are made through bank order or debit instruction, to meet the expenses on extra work load on administration and loss of interest.

(c) and (d). The premium paid by a policyholder in the first three years is just adequate to meet the procuration cost and administrative expenses such as medical Examination Fees, Stamp Duty, stationery costs, etc. Therefore, the policy does not acquire any paid-up or surrender value, which can be paid either immediately or on maturity date under such policies.

(e) Does not arise.

Bank Frauds

5609. SHRI JAI PRAKASH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 457 on March 1, 1996 regarding fraud in Banks and state :

(a) whether the information has since been collected;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons for delay ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. Information received from Reserve Bank of India regarding cases of issue of cheque books and encashment of cheques on forged signatures/requisition slip that took place in the public and private sector banks in Delhi from September, 1995 to February, 1996 is given in the Statement attached.

While the precautions to be observed for the issue/ safe custody/payment of cheque books/drafts are incorporated in the manuals/books of instructions of banks, Reserve Bank of India also advises the banks from time to time regarding precautions to be taken in this regard. The Ghosh Committee has, in its report, also made a number of recommendations/suggestions and the banks have been advised to implement these recommendations. The banks have been mainly advised :

(i) to exercise due caution for verification of the drawer's signatures, custody of specimen signature cards, supervision over issue of cheque books and control over custody of blank cheques books/leaves;

(ii) to introduce a practice of examining cheques/drafts for large amounts under ultra violet ray lamps,

(iii) to treat blank draft and mail transfer forms as security items and usual precautions for such instruments should be exercised in regard to their custody and issue;